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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/672,361	09/28/2000	Kazuhisa Kubota	55165(1004)	7557
21874	7590	05/06/2004	EXAMINER	
EDWARDS & ANGELL, LLP			WU, JINGGE	
P.O. BOX 55874			ART UNIT	
BOSTON, MA 02205			PAPER NUMBER	
			2623	
			DATE MAILED: 05/06/2004	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/672,361

Applicant(s)

KUBOTA, KAZUHISA

Examiner

Jingge Wu

Art Unit

2623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 October 2003.
2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 and 15-18 is/are allowed.
6) ☐ Claim(s) 11 and 12 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) 13 and 14 is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after allowance or after an Office action under Ex Parte Quayle, 1935 Comm'r Dec. 11 (1935). Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, prosecution in this application has been reopened pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on October 1, 2003 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in–

(1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effect under this subsection of a national application published under section 122(b) only if the international application designating the United States was published under Article 21(2)(a) of such treaty in the English language; or

(2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that a patent shall not be deemed filed in the United States for the purposes of this subsection based on the filing of an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a).

3. Claims 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by US 6389162 to Maeda.

As to claim 11, Maeda discloses an image processing method for density correction of a digital image by converting input analog image signal into digital image

signals (inherent, fig. 5, 101 and fig.9, 205), generating a pixel density histogram from the digital image and making density correction of the digital image based on the generated histogram (fig. 5, 106-108), wherein, first threshold (fig. 2, bt0) representing the threshold density for background, and the second threshold (fig. 2, noise_th) representing the minimum frequency for the background density value have been set beforehand, comprising:

defining as the background density determination area the range (fig. 2, bt0-bt1) having the density value determined based on the first threshold (col. 15 lines 35-41) and having a frequency equal to or greater than the second threshold, from the total density range of the density histogram (col. 13, line 65-col. 14 line 6, note that any output within the range (bt0-bt1) and greater than the second threshold noise_th will be output as background pixels);

determining as the background density a density class (background class) which is closest to the first threshold (all pixels in the range (bt0-bt1)), which all the density classes which belong to the background determination area (fig.2, only one background class is here as represented by the background representative density bL, fig. 7, 704, col. 15 lines 8-12);

performing density correction (noise removal) based on the density classes of the background (col. 17, lines 6-20).

As to claim 12, Maeda further discloses the frequencies in the background density determination area are sequentially compared with the second threshold, in the direction departing from the first threshold so as to determine the first density class having a frequency over the second threshold as the background density (col. 13, line 65-col. 14 line 6).

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claim 13 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if **rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.**

Claim 14 depend from claim 13, is therefore objected.

Claims 1-10 and 15-18 are allowed.

Contact Information

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications should be directed to Jingge Wu whose telephone number is (703) 308-9588. He can normally be reached Monday through Thursday from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm. The examiner can be also reached on second alternate Fridays.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to TC customer service whose telephone number is (703) 306-0377.

If attempts to reach the Examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's supervisor, Amelia Au, can be reached at (703) 308-6604.

The Working Group Fax number is (703) 872-9314.

Jingge Wu

Primary Patent Examiner